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The Stakes of Donald Trump's Negotiations with Ukraine

President Donald Trump has failed to bring peace to Ukraine as he believed he could. He has discovered a situation far more complex than he expected. Refusing to take sides, he has found himself plunged into a century-old conflict between two sworn enemies; a conflict that his predecessors, Barack Obama and Joe Biden, fueled and instrumentalized. He must therefore enlighten his fellow citizens before he can resolve the situation.

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Donald Trump receives the confession of Volodymyr Zelensky, on April 26, 2025, in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

After examining President Donald Trump's negotiations with Iran [1], we now examine his negotiations with Ukraine. Unfortunately, we do not have the documents of the Ukrainian "integral nationalists" like we do of the Israeli "revisionist Zionists." This is because today's

Ukraine is truly a military dictatorship, while in Israel, the army is still the guarantor of what remains of democracy in the face of Benjamin Netanyahu's "revisionist Zionists." The Ukrainian issue is very different from the Iranian issue in that the United States does not share the same myths with that country as it does with Israel. In the Middle East, President Donald Trump is attempting to negotiate a just and lasting peace while preserving Israel's interests (and not those of the "revisionist Zionists" who favor a Greater Israel). In Ukraine, he refuses to take sides and maintains a position of strict neutrality, while his predecessors, Barack Obama and Joe Biden, had concluded a secret agreement with the "integral nationalists" against Russia. Here too, he must uncover the truth, but this time, he must make his own administration aware of it before he can conclude anything.

DONALD TRUMP'S CLARIFICATION

On February 3, the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) accused NATO of preparing the release of three surprising pieces of information [2]:

- €1.5 billion intended for the purchase of munitions was embezzled by the Ukrainian presidency;
- 130,000 Ukrainian soldiers, killed in combat, continue to receive their salaries and appear on the electoral rolls;
- Unelected President Zelensky has transferred—not sold—real estate to foreign companies, and compensation has been discreetly paid into foreign accounts.

In response, on February 7, unelected President Volodymyr Zelensky gave an interview to Reuters [3]. In it, he stated that his country possessed a large quantity of "rare earths" and proposed exploiting them with the Allies.

Contrary to their name, "rare earths" are not "rare" in the world; their refining is. They are essential for new technologies, both civilian and especially military.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent then traveled to Kyiv to present a draft treaty for the transfer of Ukrainian subsoil as compensation for US weapons during the war. He received a cool reception from the unelected president, as the weapons had been donated and not sold over time as initially envisaged (lend-lease).

We all watched with amazement as President Donald Trump and his Vice President J.D. Vance clashed with their unelected Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelensky, on February 28, 2025, during his reception in the Oval Office of the White House. The meeting ended without the signing of Scott Bessent's planned agreement on the exploitation of "rare earths." It should be noted that the unelected President Zelensky made several attempts to position his narrative, according to which Russia had invaded Ukraine in order to annex it; a narrative that

had until then been supported by NATO. His hosts accused him of conducting a "propaganda tour" and, faced with his denials, asked him to respect the administration that was trying to prevent the destruction of his country.

While the United Kingdom and EU members (except Slovenia and Hungary) were rallying around Volodymyr Zelensky, Washington suspended its sharing of military intelligence with Kyiv on March 5. Suddenly plunged into darkness, Kyiv retreated while trying to slow its withdrawal. Within four days, it became clear that, without US military intelligence, neither the Ukrainian nor the allied armies could win. This shock deeply shook the latter, who then met several times to discuss what they needed to do to regain their effectiveness.

A PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY

Following the serious incident at the White House, Ukraine attempted to replace US support with that of the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Canada. However, these countries lack the resources comparable to Uncle Sam's.

President Donald Trump played both sides of the coin, allowing the broader European community to discuss what they could do alone. Initially, he defended the representativeness of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the face of Russia's criticism of him for not holding elections and for occupying the Ukrainian presidency without any right or title since the end of his term in May 2024. Consequently, Moscow argued that any peace agreement signed by an unelected leader could be deemed null and void and called into question. The Ukrainians pointed out to President Trump that their Constitution prevents elections from being held during a period of martial law. But Donald Trump was informed by Steve Witkoff that Volodymyr Zelensky was extending martial law three months at a time to avoid holding elections [

Giving an interview to *Le Figaro*, the unelected President Volodymyr Zelensky declared [5]: "The second motivation [that keeps me going] is hatred of the Russians who killed so many Ukrainian citizens. I know that in peacetime, it is not polite to use that word. But when you are at war, when you see soldiers entering your territory and killing innocent people, I promise you, you can feel that hatred." » He has made similar statements numerous times, saying that he "hates Russians." When asked to clarify whether he means to say that he hates Vladimir Putin, he replies, "No, all Russians!" In doing so, he is echoing the rhetoric of the "integral nationalists." Their founder, Dmytro Dontsov, claimed that Ukrainians were born to annihilate Moscow's culture and people; a principle he implemented with his Nazi allies at the head of the Reinhard Heydrich Institute.

Far from being propaganda, the Russian accusation of the Nazification of Ukraine is a reality.

President Trump secretly sent his friend Steve Witkoff, who is also a special envoy for the Middle East, to discuss an initial prisoner exchange with Kirill Dmitriev in St. Petersburg in early April. During their discussions, Dmitriev presented himself as the head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund, but also as a Russo-Ukrainian interested in the Trump administration's efforts. Having quickly concluded an initial exchange, he also arranged an unannounced meeting with President Vladimir Putin on April 11. Putin presented the Russian version of the conflict to Witkoff. Witkoff listened attentively and immediately verified the information. Back in Washington, he explained to President Trump the extent of the misunderstanding: Democratic Presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden had indeed reached an agreement with neo-Nazis to seize Ukraine. The latter persecuted Russian-speaking Ukrainians. Russia did not invade the country to annex it, but implemented Security Council Resolution 2202 (the Minsk Agreements), for which it had guaranteed. Instead of helping, loyal to Democrats Barack Obama and Joe Biden, Germany and France, who had also guaranteed the implementation of Resolution 2202, had consciously accused Russia of invading Ukraine.

Donald Trump, who had long known Witkoff personally and trusted him, instantly understood the Democrats' manipulation. Having observed Zelensky's attitude against him during Russiagate and his involvement in the Biden-Harris election campaign, he quickly formed new convictions.

On April 14, President Donald Trump adopted the Witkoff version and lamented Zelensky's initiation of the war, declaring: "You don't start a war against someone 20 times superior and then hope that people will give you missiles." On April 17, he sent both sides a peace proposal, which Ukraine rejected and Russia accepted with reservations. There remain four points of disagreement between the United States and Russia:

- Moscow continues to bomb military targets in civilian areas during the negotiations. Since the Hague Conferences (1899 and 1907), it has been accepted that civilized nations will not place military installations among civilians; however, the Ukrainians use their own population as "human shields." Similarly, it is accepted that during negotiations, both sides scrupulously ensure that only military personnel fight, so Russia is also wrong.
- Washington only accepts the demilitarization of Ukraine if foreign forces can ensure security there. Moscow therefore proposes the deployment of UN peacekeepers, while the

Allies demand that they deploy themselves. But, in light of previous episodes, Moscow believes that they will not ensure peace, but will continue the war.

- Moscow intends to conquer all the oblasts that voted to join the Russian Federation, while Washington believes that the few unoccupied areas of these oblasts must remain Ukrainian, with the final borders being those of the ceasefire.

For several years, Ukraine has organized an annual international demonstration to reaffirm its sovereignty over Crimea, annexed by Russia in 2014. However, when the Soviet Union collapsed, Crimea declared its independence before Ukraine. Moscow continued to pay civil servants and pensions there for several years until President Boris Yeltsin abandoned this costly territory and Crimea agreed to join Ukraine. In 2014, when "integral nationalists" overthrew the elected president, Crimea voted for independence a second time, and then to join the Russian Federation. President Donald Trump considers this annexation legal for two reasons: first, it was a referendum in accordance with international law, and second, Ukraine did not object to it at the time.

- Kyiv intends to hand over to itself the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and the Kakhovka hydroelectric dam, essential for cooling the nuclear power plant, something Moscow firmly opposes. This demand contradicts the previous point, since these two facilities are now controlled by Russia. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), at the start of the war, the Zaporizhzhia power plant housed an incredible stockpile of plutonium and enriched uranium, accumulated in violation of international treaties. Russia, considering the plant a priority target, seized it at the very beginning of its special military operation. It managed to recover the fissile material and transfer some of it to what was then Russian territory. Numerous clashes took place then, suggesting that not everything had been taken away.

During Pope Francis's funeral in Rome on April 26, Presidents Trump and Zelensky met again in St. Peter's Basilica for a quarter of an hour. It seems they agreed to start anew, with the United States and Ukraine putting everything that had come before aside. They would no longer talk about war, but about a month-long truce, and would engage together in reconstruction. Of course, this reconciliation wouldn't resolve much, but it would allow them to consider the future from a new perspective.

Scalded by the failure to comply with Resolution 2202 as much as by the recent Easter truce, Russia immediately expressed its opposition to an extended truce. On the contrary, it unilaterally announced a suspension of hostilities on the anniversary of the victory over

Nazism, on May 9th; an affront to the Ukrainian "integral nationalists," allies of the Nazis, which they promptly rejected.

THE CREATION OF THE UNITED STATES-UKRAINE REINVESTMENT FUND

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko signed an agreement in Washington on April 30 creating a "United States-Ukraine Reinvestment Fund." Contrary to what news agencies have said (and which we have reported, see VAI 3394), this is not a simple reformulation of the US proposal for the exploitation of "rare earths," but a radically new system.

A study of the text, now available, reveals that the United States is waiving reimbursement for the weapons it delivered to Ukraine, while Ukraine is waiving security guarantees [6]. Washington is offering the Ukrainians the opportunity to manage both the continuation of the war and the reconstruction of the country. Kyiv will only receive new money in proportion to the profits that Ukrainian-American companies make in Kyiv, half of which will be managed by the Joint Fund. Kyiv can either use this revenue to buy weapons and lose them in combat, or to rebuild its country. Ukraine will retain "full control over its subsoil, infrastructure, and natural resources," Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal declared. The creation of the fund will also not harm Ukraine's membership in the European Union.

Addressing the nation on May 1, unelected President Volodymyr Zelensky said: "We spoke with the President of the United States, Donald Trump, about our readiness to conclude the agreement – we discussed it at our meeting at the Vatican. In fact, this is the first tangible result of this Vatican meeting, which makes it truly historic." [7]

The Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada (parliament) is expected to ratify the agreement between May 13 and 15. The US Treasury Secretary stated: "The United States is committed to helping facilitate an end to this cruel and senseless war. This agreement sends a clear message to Russia that the Trump administration is committed to a peace process centered on a free, sovereign, and prosperous Ukraine for the long term. President Trump envisioned this partnership between the American and Ukrainian people to demonstrate both sides' commitment to lasting peace and prosperity in Ukraine. And to be clear, no state or individual that financed or supplied the Russian war machine will be allowed to benefit from the reconstruction of Ukraine." [8]

According to Reuters, given the political uncertainties and the time required to establish mines and factories, the United States and Ukraine could wait a decade or more to reap revenues from a minerals agreement. [9].

In an interview with Fox News Digital, Vice President JD Vance said he has given himself 100 days from the signing of the agreement to conclude peace between Ukraine and Russia.

Thierry Meyssan

Translation

Roger Lagassé

[1] [“The Stakes of Donald Trump’s Negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran”](#), by Thierry Meyssan, Translation Roger Lagassé, *Voltaire Network*, 29 April 2025.

[2] [« Натовцы готовят кампанию по дискредитации В. Зеленского »](#), Пресс-бюро СВР России, 3 Февраля 2025.

[3] [« Quotes from President Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s interview with Reuters »](#), *Reuters*, February 7, 2025.

[4] [«Проект Закону про затвердження Указу Президента України "Про продовження строку дії воєнного стану в Україні"»](#), ерховна Рада України.

[5] [«Volodymyr Zelensky : "Stopper la guerre c’est stopper Poutine"»](#), Isabelle Lassere, *Le Figaro*, 27 mars 2025.

[6] [“United States-Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund”](#), *Voltaire Network*, 30 April 2025.

[7] [«Маємо перший результат ватиканської зустрічі, який робить її історичною – звернення Президента»](#), Президент України , 1 травня 2025 року

[8] [«Treasury Announces Agreement to Establish United States-Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund»](#), *US Department of the Tresuary*, April 30, 2025.

[9] [«US, Ukraine may wait decade or more to see revenue from minerals deal»](#), Eric Onstad & Pavel Polityuk, *Reuters*, May 1, 2025.